

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Sir, all the Telephones in the rural areas are not out of order for a long time. Only 11,952 Village Public Telephones (VPTs) out of 2,67,220 are lying faulty as on 30th April, 1997. In Howrah district 84 VPTs out of 319 total installed are out of order.

(b) The reasons for non-functioning of VPTs are as follows:

- (i) Remote and inaccessible location;
- (ii) Theft of overhead Lines and Wire;
- (iii) Unstable power supply;
- (iv) Damage due to lightning;

(v) Damage by extremists particularly in Andhra Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

(c) The following steps are being taken to improve the functioning of Village Public Telephones:-

(i) All the VPTs are tested daily from the concerned exchange. VPT faults are reported to the Sub Divisional Engineer incharge of the exchange daily. Faults pending for more than 2 days, 7 days or longer are looked into by the field officers at various higher levels.

(ii) The performance of VPTs is monitored at the Headquarters regularly;

(iii) Annual Maintenance Contract for the repair of faulty Modules of Multi Access Rural Radio equipment is being entered into by the field units;

(iv) The telecom circles are setting up Circle Repair Centres for in-house repair of MARR Systems;

(v) Action is being taken to equip all VPTs with Solar panel power back up;

(vi) Action to replace unserviceable MARR equipment is being taken;

(d) The process of VPTs becoming faulty and their rectifies a continuous one. The faults on VPTs do take place occasionally and are detected by field units of DOT, who are monitoring their performance, continuously. Repair action of faulty VPTs is also being taken on a continuous basis.

[Translation]

Agreement with Foreign Countries

5244. SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH:

SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any discussion was held with foreign countries regarding cooperation in the railway sector;

(b) If so, the details and the outcome thereof, country-wise; and

(c) the names of the foreign companies which have signed agreements with the Government for cooperation in the Railway Sector alongwith its affect on production, project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement is attached.

(c) Nil. However, IRCON and RITES two PSUs under Ministry of Railways have signed some agreements with foreign companies.

Statement

Discussions were held with foreign countries regarding cooperation in the Railway sector at various levels, the countries where specific proposal have been agreed to is listed below:

Country	Details of outcome
1	2
IRAN	(i) Exchange of Technical experts in the field of training. (ii) Contract for signalling project for Shahrud-Mashad section. (iii) Upgradation of Maintenance Facilities for Locomotive Workshop. (iv) Container movement and Multi modal Transport.
IRAQ	The Iraqi side mentioned spare parts and other critical materials for rehabilitating track, rolling stock, signalling and telecommunication equipment as their immediate requirements for the present.
JAPAN	(i) Upgradation of coach building facilities at ICF to achieve international quality standards. (ii) Study and determination of track structure for high speeds of 160 kmph. and above. (iii) Development of high speed OHE including the provision of 'fit & forget type fittings', suitable for running of trains upto 200 km/h. (iv) Metro Railway (v) Safety After this 8th meeting of Indo-Japan Railway working Group held on 21.1.97. The minutes are under finalisation with Sr. Dy. Director General of Japanese Railways.

1	2
AUSTRIA	Collaboration in areas of hardened steel rails, points and signalling. The Austrian side also mentioned about their interest in participating in the Delhi Mass Railway Transit System.
ROMANIA	It was agreed to study the possibility of setting up of working groups in Railway.
CZECH REPUBLIC	Indian side conveyed its interest in providing support and services in the following areas in the railway sector:
	(i) Technical and management support services for repair and maintenance of rolling stock.
	(ii) Procurement of spare parts.
	(iii) Supply of locos along with spare parts to specific performance.
	(iv) Traffic audit for developing the standard of maintenance of locos, coaches and wagons.
	(v) Contract maintenance packages.
	(vi) Technical assistance in the field of OHE
	(vii) Rehabilitation of railway track and bridges.
	(viii) Rehabilitation of loco workshop.
	(ix) Leasing/supply of locos.
	(x) Supply/Leasing of other rolling stock.
SLOVENIA	-do-
RUSSIA	A meeting took place both Russian Transport Minister and M.R. Three areas of cooperation between Indian and Russian Railways have been identified, these being:
	(a) Transport of import-export cargo; this will be mostly by containers by a combined rail-cum-sea route.
	(b) Transfer of technology, including imports from Russia in areas as suited to Indian Railways.
	(c) Cooperation in the construction of railway lines and maintenance of assets via IRCON & RITES.
	Working Groups for item (a) and (b) are under formation.
NEPAL	Greater Janakpur Development Project Broad Gauge Rail line between Raxaul and Birganj.

1	2
GERMAN	Improvement of signalling on Delhi-Kanpur Corridor (yet to be finalised)
AUSTRALIA	Government of India and Government of Australia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 3rd October, 1994 for the implementation of Railway Simulator Project under India-Australia Development Cooperation Programme.

[English]

Proposals for Promotion of Tourism in Gujarat

5245. SHRI B.K. GADHVI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Gujarat has submitted various proposals for the promotion of tourism in the State during 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Union Government on each of the proposals; and

(c) the details of financial assistance given to Gujarat during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) to (c) 11 projects submitted by the Government of Gujarat for central financial assistance were approved and a sum of Rs. 82.21 lakhs was sanctioned during 1996-97. These projects included Flood lighting and refurbishment of monuments, tourist reception centres, public conveniences, etc. The amount sanctioned for various tourism projects in Gujarat during last three years are as given below:-

Year	Amount sanctioned (Rs. in lakhs)
1994-95	21.95
1995-96	7.98
1996-97	82.21

Conversion of LPT into HPT, Himachal Pradesh

5246. SHRI SAT MAHAJAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the reception of programme being relayed through the Dharamshala LPT, Himachal Pradesh is very poor as compared to Lahore Station of Pakistan television;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to convert the LPT into HPT in Dharamshala;

(d) if so, the time by which it is likely to be converted;